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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SIXTY-SIXTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

H. R. 9927

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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

SIXTY-SIXTH CONGRESS,

FIRST SESSION.

STEPHEN G. PORTER, Pennsylvania, *Chairman*.

JOHN JACOB ROGERS, Massachusetts.
HENRY W. TEMPLE, Pennsylvania.
AMBROSE KENNEDY, Rhode Island.
EDWARD E. BROWNE, Wisconsin.
MERRILL MOORES, Indiana.
WILLIAM E. MASON, Illinois.
WALTER H. NEWTON, Minnesota.
L. J. DICKINSON, Iowa.
ERNEST R. ACKERMAN, New Jersey.
FRANK L. SMITH, Illinois.
JAMES T. BEGG, Ohio.
ALANSON B. HOUGHTON, New York

HENRY D. FLOOD, Virginia.
J. CHARLES LINTHICUM, Maryland.
WILLIAM S. GOODWIN, Arkansas.
CHARLES M. STEDMAN, North Carolina.
ADOLPH J. SABATH, Illinois.
J. WILLARD RAGSDALE, South Carolina.
GEORGE HUDDLESTON, Alabama.
TOM CONNALLY, Texas.
THOMAS F. SMITH, New York.

EDMUND F. ERK, *Clerk*

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REMOVING BODIES OF DECEASED SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AND MARINES FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES TO THE UNITED STATES.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Thursday, October 23, 1919.

The committee met at 10.30 o'clock a. m., Hon. John J. Rogers (acting chairman) presiding.

Mr. ROGERS. Gentlemen, we are here this morning to consider the bill (H. R. 9927) introduced by Mr. Bland, of Indiana, authorizing the appointment of a commission to remove the bodies of deceased soldiers, sailors, and marines from foreign countries to the United States, etc. The committee will remember that in July we held hearings upon the resolution introduced by Mr. Wood, of Indiana, on the same general subject, but presented from a different angle. Mr. Bland, as you all know, has just returned from France, where he had unusual opportunities to discover the facts, and he should be able to make recommendations of value to the House.

Mr. Bland, if you will make a statement we will be glad to hear you.

STATEMENT OF HON. OSCAR E. BLAND, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA.

Mr. BLAND. Mr. Chairman, I know that, necessarily, I can not go into detail in the limited time that you gentlemen have to consider this matter, and, therefore, I will hasten along with a view to giving an opportunity to the two witnesses who have been kind enough to come here to testify on this important question.

As stated by the chairman, I have just returned from France. While there I undertook to make an investigation with a view to ascertaining if it was feasible and possible to bring home the bodies of the deceased soldiers that are buried in France and elsewhere. I visited a number of the graves and a number of the cemeteries. We have more than 75,000 soldiers buried in France, and they are in 829 cemeteries. We took the testimony of Maj. Shipman, of the Graves Registration Service, in Paris, in order to get the details with reference to this subject.

Mr. HOUGHTON. You say you took testimony on the subject?

Mr. BLAND. Yes.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Before what body?

Mr. BLAND. Before the Committee for the Investigation of Expenditures of the War Department. Maj. Shipman showed himself to be quite familiar with the subject, and he was in charge of that office there.

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Mr. HUDDLESTON. Have you had the hearings on that subject printed?

Mr. BLAND. Yes.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. Have they been sent to the Members?

Mr. BLAND. I take it that they have. Those who have signified their wishes to have copies of the hearings of those subcommittees on war expenditures have them on their desks, or I am so informed by the chairman of the general committee.

Mr. BROWNE. That is Mr. Graham?

Mr. BLAND. Yes. In connection with this investigation, the facts were brought out with reference to the area covered by these cemeteries, and I found that they were scattered all over the whole of France. Some of the graves are in French cemeteries, where, perhaps, just a few Americans are buried, and others are in very large concentrated cemeteries near the battle areas. For instance, at Romange there are about 22,000 graves, and they are still burying them, or bringing them in from places where they were hastily buried near the battle lines. In fact, some few bodies are being found in isolated places in the Argonne Forest, having been buried there at the time they fell. All of those 75,000 graves have been identified, and all of the bodies have been identified with the exception of 1,500. As to that 1,500, they are being slowly identified as the proof comes in. In the month preceding the taking of this testimony, the testimony having been taken in September, they had identified 150 that had not been identified before. They are doing that in many different ways—through letters ,and through circumstanaial evidence, and facts that they are gathering.

Mr. ROGERS. Let me ask you a question at that point: Was it not the requirement of the War Department that every man should wear a bracelet or necklace with an identification number upon it?

Mr. BLAND. He had two tags around his neck made of soft metal, probably of aluminum, but sometimes the body was so thoroughly shot up that they found no identification tag on the body at all.

Mr. NEWTON. Did you also find that in burying the bodies they sometimes buried them without the tags, and that they could not find any at all?

Mr. BLAND. Yes; that is where the identification tag was destroyed by shell fire. Among those 1,500 I have referred to, there are several cases of that kind. Then, it is also a fact that the action of the decaying flesh upon those tags has frequently obliterated the identification tag. However, I think I am fairly accurate in saying that the percentage of graves that can not be identified is not very large, although there are some, of course. Now, those cemeteries are so arranged that the graves are placed very close together. In fact, I think it must be admitted that in order to take up some of those bodies you must necessarily disturb neighboring bodies, and I think that is used as one of the objections to taking out those whose parents want them and leaving those whose parents do not want them, but if we concentrate the cemeteries the same objection obtains. Ordinarily the officers are placed with the men, although we found one or two cemeteries where the officers had been buried around the flagpole, at the center of the cemetery. This was done where it was at all possible to do so. White and colored are buried together alike, no discrimination having been shown.

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Mr. NEWTON. Do they have the same markings for the graves of officers and privates?

Mr. BLAND. Yes. In each one of those cemeteries they have a large map or blue print, under glass, which shows a diagram of the cemetery, and the numbers, and by consulting the list you can ascertain exactly which grave is the grave of some particular soldier.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. How are the graves marked?

Mr. BLAND. With a little metal marker on a white cross about 4 feet high and 3 feet wide.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. Is it a wooden cross?

Mr. BLAND. Yes. It is made of 1½ or 2 inch soft wood, painted white, and on that is placed one of the tags taken from around the neck of the soldier; and there is also some other identification mark in a little frame on the cross. We found that vandals were taking off of those graves a great many of those identification tags. At first I was very much alarmed at that, because I found that so many had been pried off—they are simply tacked on—but I discovered that one of the tags is buried with the body, and if the other tag is stolen from the grave it does not affect the identification.

That is true because if the grave is once mapped and numbered there would be no question about the identification of it. There would be no question about the identification of the grave as that of a given soldier, because the map or diagram shows that. Therefore the inquiry of parents as to whether they would be sure of getting their sons—and I have answered a great many letters of that kind—I think can be safely answered affirmatively. I think we can safely say that where the grave has been identified, the number put on, and the name put on, it is almost certain that that is the grave of the soldier named. There may be instances of mistaken identity, but those instances will be exceptions to the rule. The article that Justice McCoy has just handed you represents the plates or name plates that are put on the wooden crosses at the middle of the cross.

Mr. NEWTON. The name is put on the inside, up against the cross, so that it will be protected from the weather?

Mr. BLAND. Yes. I took up the question of tranportation in France, in the event that we undertook to get those bodies out of there, and Maj. Shipman was of the opinion that the transportation problem was almost, if not absolutely, insurmountable. I think those were his exact words. He stated that the transportation facilities during the war had been so depleted that they have not had the opportunity or the finances to recruit them, and that it would be impossible to transport those bodies out.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. Does that mean by rail or highway?

Mr. BLAND. By rail. He also takes the position that the labor conditions in France are such that it would be impossible to handle the problem. I do not think his position is well taken, nor do I think it is sustained by other high authorities in the Graves Registration Service. I hope that Col. Pierce will give you the advantage of his experience in this connection. The Adjutant General's Office has undertaken to ascertain the wishes of the parents of the deceased soldiers in regard to this question, and I was informed the other day that of the seventy-five or seventy-six thousand parents who were notified or requested to send in an expression of their wishes in this matter, all

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but 16,000 replied, and that of that number over 71 per cent were in favor of bringing the bodies home. I find that there is a strong reliance on the part of parents of soldiers who were killed in France upon the promise of the Government and the War Department to bring the bodies of these soldiers home, and from the correspondence and personal interviews that I have had with the parents of soldiers, I believe that they will be inconsolable if those bodies are not brought back. I do not think that there could be any objection raised by the French Government that would be insurmountable.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Why do you think that?

Mr. BLAND. While I was in Paris there was a rumor of French activity to prevent the movement of the bodies of our soldiers, and I discovered that there was a very large sentiment in the American Expeditionary Force in favor of keeping those bodies there. I do not know whether I am right about it, but I somehow feel that a great many of our American Expeditionary Force officers are pretty hard-boiled by reason of their terrible experience in France, and that they have not enough sympathy in their souls to enable them to put themselves in the place of the parents of the deceased soldiers. In fact, those who talked to me put themselves in the place of the dead man in each instance and said, "If I had fallen in France, I would want to remain where I fell."

Mr. HOUGHTON. What is the attitude of the French Government?

Mr. BLAND. Now, I think that the sentiment of some Americans in France has been somewhat responsible for the apparent attitude of the French. In the first place, France is not going to overlook the financial advantage of keeping those graves in France. France is thoroughly a tourist country, and there are no fatter sheep led to the slaughter than the Americans, when it comes to profiteering on them, and I can not help but believe that they would be very anxious on that account for those bodies to remain there. Then, again, they have a real objection to their being removed, and that I think is entitled to consideration in interpreting their feelings in the matter: They have in France over four and a half million dead bodies from this war, and more than one-half of them are French, and they contend that if the bodies of foreigners are taken up and removed——

Mr. HUDDLESTON (interposing). Does that include the German dead?

Mr. BLAND. No; it does not include them. They contend that if the bodies of foreigners are removed, their people will at once ask for the removal of the bodies of the French; but their position is not similar to ours at all, because France is a small country, and their dead are buired in their own soil, while our dead are buried in the soil of a foreign country. They can visit the graves of their loved ones in a short time, but we can not. That is the difference between them and ourselves.

Again, I take the position that we may not always be at peace with France. We may not always have the same relation with her that we have now. Besides, France is and has been throughout all the centuries the great battle ground of the world, and we do not know but what the cannon of future inventors may dig up those very graves in years to come. I am quite sure that the parents of the soldiers would feel much safer and more contented if the bodies of their sons were buried in American soil.

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Mr. HOUGHTON. Then, do I understand that, so far as France is concerned, you feel that her interest is purely pecuniary, and that it is due to their desire to exploit the graves?

Mr. BLAND. I think that is a consideration.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Do you think that is largely the consideration?

Mr. BLAND. I will be very frank with you and say that my impression of the French people or my admiration of the French people was not in any way increased by my two short sojourns there recently, and I can not help but feel that they will want this pilgrimage to begin to those graves.

Mr. MASON. Just in a word, what does your bill provide for?

Mr. BLAND. The bill provides for the appointment of a commission to consist of a representative of the Army, a representative of the Navy, a representative of the Marine Corps, and two civilians, to be appointed by the President, and who shall serve for a compensation of not more than $5,000 per annum. The commission is to adopt plans, rules, and regulations, and proceed to bring home the bodies of these deceased soldiers.

Mr. NEWTON. All of them?

Mr. BLAND. All of those whose parents desire it. They are to ascertain in the most intelligent manner, as it may appear to them, how this consent or expression of wishes shall be obtained, and to report to Congress covering what they intend to do. The bill makes an appropriation of $50,000,000 for this purpose. I will touch upon that proposition in just a moment.

Mr. ROGERS. Before you proceed, I think it may be well to point out that the title of your bill does not quite accurately outline the text of the bill. The title authorizes the appointment of a commission to remove the bodies of deceased soldiers, sailors, and marines, but the bill, on the other hand, as I read it, provides that this commission shall examine into the subject of the reinterment of all soldiers, sailors, marines, and other persons connected with the American Expeditionary Forces, and shall file with the President to be by him transmitted to Congress a detailed statement of its conclusions and recommendations and as to what further legislation or action, if any, is deemed necessary, etc.

Mr. BLAND. Section 2 covers that.

Mr. ROGERS. Section 2 provides for the bringing back of those——

Mr. BLAND (interposing). They are directed to bring them back.

Mr. ROGERS. Section 2 provides for the bringing back of those whose relatives desire them to be brought back. It would strike me, although it is a mere detail, that either the title or section 1 should be modified somewhat.

Mr. BLAND. I think the title should be more comprehensive. I think that is true.

Mr. MASON. Do you not think that the Army should bring these bodies home?

Mr. BLAND. I have just stated, Mr. Mason, a moment ago, or at the beginning of my statement, that I feel that the Army—and, gentlemen, it is not a political question, because men of all politics are in the Army and they differ, and honestly differ, on the question, and I am not impugning the motives of the man who wants these bodies buried in France, except in some instances where they pretend to be in favor of both propositions. As I was saying, I think that

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the Army authorities are trying to cultivate a sentiment in favor of leaving those bodies in France. Furthermore, I believe that they are trying to get legislation through Congress that will forever determine the policy on this question, and that will always be a difficult thing to overcome if we ever attempt to remove the bodies.

Mr. KENNEDY. Has the War Department passed on your bill in any way?

Mr. BLAND. No. Col. Pierce voluntarily came to my office the other day and expressed himself as being in sympathy with the purposes of the bill, but I do not know his views as to the appointment of a commission. I take it that no good Army man would be willing to let the handling of those graves go out of the hands of the Army, if possible to prevent it; but the spirit of the movement for bringing them back, I think, is shared by the head of the graves registration.

Mr. KENNEDY. I understand that the War Department has most of this information now as to the wishes and desires of relatives and parents.

Mr. BLAND. Sixteen thousand of them have not answered. I have replies from some of those 16,000, and they asked me what they should reply, for the reason that they were not sure of getting their sons. They were doubtful as to whether they would get the bodies of their own sons, or not. There has been a great amount of talk to the effect that you could not identify the bodies, and that they would not be able to identify them if they were brought home.

Mr. NEWTON. I talked with some of the men when I was over there who were in rather close touch during the Argonne fight with the burial squads and they said that the identification marks on some of those men were of no use.

Mr. BLAND. Wherever the tag was shot away or torn away from the body, there was always a chance that the body would not be properly identified, of course, but I think that is the exception to the rule. Now, I want to proceed along the line of the question asked me a moment ago by Mr. Houghton with reference to France. Some man introduced a bill in the Chamber of Deputies, and under the French law the president has the power by ministerial decree of putting a bill into effect as law temporarily. That was done in connection with the removal of the bodies, and the bill applied to all bodies, French and American as well, for a period of three years. As I said before, I feel that the attitude of the French is partly due to the attitude of the American higher-ups in America and France, who encourage them in this proposition. I furthermore feel, and I believe I am justified in feeling——

Mr. HUDDLESTON (interposing). What is the reason for that feeling?

Mr. BLAND. The statement of Secretary of War Baker, which is the main thing I rely upon, and the statement of Gen. Pershing.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. What was the statement of Secretary Baker?

Mr. BLAND. He said that the people should sympathize with the position of the War Department.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. What is the position of the War Department?

Mr. BLAND. It is just what I have stated.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. We have heretofore had a hearing on this subject, and I have been unable to learn that, although we had the Chief of Staff here. I wanted to find out what the position is.

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Mr. BLAND. I am talking of the statement of the Secretary of War.

Mr. HUDDLESTON In what form was the statement made

Mr. BLAND. If you will look at a copy of my speech, on this subject you will see that Mr. Gard inserted a statement by Secretary Baker, and I would like for you to read that. I think I could give you valuable information on that subject later.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. That was contrary to the statements made by Gen. March and Gen. Harris before the committee at a previous hearing. I think it should be made perfectly clear that that is the position of the War Department.

Mr. BLAND. That depends on what you mean when you say the War Department.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. I take it that a statement by the Chief of Staff would be authoritative on that.

Mr. BLAND. Here is the statement of Secretary Baker:

In view of the very large number of dead interred in France, and the fact that they are in well-kept and well-cared-for cemeteries, and that those cemeteries will constitute a great field of honor in France, the War Department hopes that a large number of parents will sympathize with the feeling of the department that it is the wiser and better course to leave those bodies in France; but the War Department has promised to return the bodies of those whose families insist upon it as soon as arrangements can be effected.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. On what occasion was that?

Mr. BLAND. Now, in the meantime, there is a bill that the War Department is trying to put through Congress, as I understand it——

Mr. HUDDLESTON (interposing). Let us find out more about that statement. Where was that statement made?

Mr. BLAND. Mr. Gard read it into my speech on October 15. That is all I know about the statement.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. To whom was it made and who made it?

Mr. BLAND. Mr. Gard made this statement on the floor of the House:

Mr. Chairman, I desire to state to the gentleman that I hold in my hand a copy of the statement of the Secretary of War in which he says this, if the gentleman will permit me to read it.

Then he read the statement I have just read to you. Then later Mr. Gard said:

That is what the War Department says. If the parents want the bodies back, they will be brought back.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. That is a hearsay statement. It seems to me that we are getting into the record some hearsay statements on the subject.

Mr. BLAND. Here is the quotation.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. We had before our committee a form of letter that was sent out by the War Department to parents, and we also had the statements made by the Chief of Staff, Gen. March, on this subject, and the matter was discussed quite fully. I am sorry that those hearings were not printed. This statement is absolutely in contradiction to the position that the War Department took then. In other words, the assertion was made by Gen. March and also by The Adjutant General, Gen. Harris, that there had been no effort whatever to influence opinion on this subject; that the War Depart-

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ment took no position, but simply gave to the parents the option of deciding the matter. Is not that correct, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. ROGERS. That was three months ago.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. I want to know whether this statement was made since then or before.

Mr. BLAND. I feel sure that this statement was made by the Secretary of War, or Mr. Gard would not have quoted it.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. Do you know in what form that statement was given out by the Secretary of War?

Mr. BLAND. Mr. Gard simply read that statement into my speech.

Mr. CONNALLY. As I understand it, your bill is for the bringing back of all the soldiers' bodies?

Mr. BLAND. Only of those whose parents desire it.

Mr. CONNALLY. As I undestood your statement somewhere a moment ago, it was that the War Department had promised to do this and was going to do that very thing, was it not?

Mr. BLAND. Yes, but his statement also indicates that he has not that view of the situation, but that they ought to remain in France.

Mr. CONNALLY. It is immaterial what he personally thinks about it.

Mr. BLAND. In view of the fact that there is legislation going to be forced through Congress here, in my judgment, at the request of the War Department, that would forever prevent us from bringing them back, I take it that the real attitude of the War Department is against bringing these bodies back and I drew this bill to get it out of the War Department's hands and determine now the policy of bringing them back.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. What legislation do you refer to, Mr. Bland?

Mr. BLAND. A bill introduced in the Senate and House appropriating, as I remember, either $200,000 or $500,000 for the buying of a field of honor in France to bury these dead in.

Mr. ROGERS. There was a speech in favor of it by Dr. Fess.

Mr. HOUGHTON. There can be no objection to having such a field of honor for the bodies of those whose parents do not wish them back. Did we not in our earlier consideration of this matter reach a conclusion in the committee, and that was that the wise thing at that time was to leave the matter in the hands of the chairman to discuss with the State Department to accurately find out the French position and in general what was feasible and possible or advisable?

Mr. BLAND. I might call your attention to a provision of the peace treaty on that subject. The peace treaty provides this (Article 225):

> The allied and associated Governments and the German Government will cause to be respected and maintained the graves of the soldiers and sailors buried in their respective territories.
>
> They agree to recognize any commission appointed by an allied or associated Government for the purpose of identifying, registering, caring for, or erecting suitable memorials over the said graves and to facilitate the discharge of its duties.
>
> Furthermore, they agree to afford, so far as the provisions of their laws and the requirements of public health allow, every facility for giving effect to requests at the bodies of their soldiers and sailors may be transferred to their own country.

I think that throws some light upon what was in the mind of the peace commissioners at the time this was drafted. I take it they were cognizant of what was in the minds of the American people, that we have our dead brought home.

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Col. Pierce has informed me—he is not here yet—that the transportation question that was mentioned by Maj. Shipman is not as serious as he indicated, and I think it is apparent that a nation of people who have accomplished as big things as we have accomplished recently are not going to assume that we are not qualified to remove 75 per cent of the bodies in 75,000 graves and bring them home. I have been asked frequently when we ought to do this. No doubt you gentlemen of the committee are observing a great amount of impatience about bringing these bodies home. Some members of Congress felt we ought to bring them home next month or this month. I tried to get the best information on that that I could get and I want to ask Col. Pierce on that subject, because I know he is more familiar with that. Most of these bodies were buried without coffins. It is a very grewsome task and has been to take up these bodies and transplant them within a year to these concentration cemeteries, and it is a very unpleasant task that these boys from Mr. Mason's district have been performing there in the Romagne cemetery.

The French probably would have a right to complain at the sanitary conditions that might prevail if we were to attempt it just now. When a body is not buried in a coffin, the action of the ground, I am informed, absorbing moisture, will permit the body to be removed sooner than if it was buried in a coffin, without the unsanitary conditions prevailing that would make it impossible. Therefore, I think that is in favor of the removal of the dead to America. Motor transportation would be good in France to the seaboard from the graveyards. It would be an easy matter to transport these bodies by motor transport and I do not think we would have any trouble on that question. As to labor, I am of the opinion that we can get all the labor in America and take it there and bring these bodies home. We have all the ship facilities we need and more than we need.

As to the amount of money we have asked for in the bill, I will say to you gentlemen that is a guess. I do not know and I do not think any other man knows what it would take to do this job, but as said by the Graves Registration Service in Paris by Col. Shipman, it is a question of policy, this bringing them back. If it was promised to do this, I think it ought to be done. I have introduced this bill and asked you gentlemen to take action on it because of the fear that some legislation would be passed that might handicap us in the task later, legislation that is honestly espoused by men who think it would be better to leave the graves there.

Before you asked the question, I wanted to refer to Theodore Roosevelt's son. I think his statement has caused some parents to waver about wanting their boys back when they really wanted them. Col. Roosevelt's son fell in a very beautiful spot and he is buried near there, and through the kindness of the graves registration service it has received special attention. It is by itself, and every soldier can not be buried that way, and Mrs. Roosevelt has been over to see the grave. The parents in my district are not very many of them able to do it. I have provided that the bodies be turned over to the parents to be buried in local cemeteries or where they direct. I admit that is a problem and I am not so sure on that the com-

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mittee will agree. I took it to some other men, who were in Congress, and interested in the subject, and they were of the impression that we ought as far as possible to bury them in the national cemeteries and bring them as near to the home of the soldier's family as was possible.

Mr. MASON. Should not that be left to the discretion of the parents the same as to whether they should be brought home? Let the parent decide. I have some people who want their boys buried in their own lots in the little towns where they live. That is what they promised them.

Mr. BLAND. Unless you have something to ask, I do not believe I will take up more time of the committee because there are two other gentlemen that I want you to hear.

Mr. DICKINSON. What is the necessity for immediate action in this matter at the present time if it is going to be a period of one year or a year and a half or probably two years before we can really commence the task?

Mr. BLAND. I find that when we attempt a big task, especially one so big that those engaged in it regard it as insurmountable, we ought to have at least a year to prepare for it.

Mr. DICKINSON. Do you think it would be necessary to begin a year ahead?

Mr. BLAND. Yes; I think we will not get all the information we need from these parents until then.

Mr. DICKINSON. Is it not true that this would be a duplication of information already in the hands of the War Department?

Mr. BLAND. I am of the impression that we need additional information to what the War Department has.

Mr. DICKINSON. What additional information would you think would be necessary in view of the fact that the War Department has submitted the request and asked for the wishes?

Mr. BLAND. I think that the wishes of the parents should be consulted as to whether they want them buried in concentration cemeteries or in their own graveyards.

Mr. DICKINSON. Do you think it ought to take a year to ascertain that?

Mr. BLAND. A year, or two years. They are going to remove some of those graves from other countries outside of France, from Belgium and England, Russia, and Germany; they are moving these graves right away. Col. Pierce can tell you all about that.

Mr. DICKINSON. Are you sure as to whether or not the concentration of these graves in a national American cemetery over there for our soldier dead would change the views of numerous parents of American boys that are buried there?

Mr. BLAND. I do not quite understand the question.

Mr. DICKINSON. In other words, do you think that if the mother, the parent, was advised that the body had been properly taken out of his temporary burial place and placed in the National Cemetery over there, to be cared for by our Government, there would be a change of view of many of these parents as to whether or not they desired their return?

Mr. BLAND. It might, in some instances, but I do not think very much. I think passing time causes people to forget sorrows and

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troubles somewhat and probably in a few years from now there would not be as many want their sons as want them now. But I do think where any mother or father wants their child brought home, that we took that child and took his life, they certainly ought to have his body when we promised it to them, and there is no excuse for not giving it to them. Congress can not afford to take the position that would keep these mothers from geting them back.

Mr. DICKINSON. Are you not, in the organization of this commission, duplicating authority that is already vested in the War Department?

Mr. BLAND. If there is such authority in the War Department, it is certainly indefinite, and not sufficient as to require them to act without further direction from Congress, in my judgment.

Mr. DICKINSON. Did not we vote for an appropriation bill that included a large item, part of which was, as stated on the floor of the House, to be for that very purpose?

Mr. BLAND. That is for taking care of graves and taking care of cemeteries. I do not think it is provided for bringing bodies home, and it is not directory or mandatory. I tell you that it is my impression, gentlemen, and you will find it out before you get through with this thing, that you have got to have some directory or mandatory action in order to get this thing done and have a business organization with a head to it.

Mr. DICKINSON. Don't you think our War Department is a business organization with a head to it?

Mr. BLAND. I am sorry you asked me that question, but I think that the War Department has very serious limitations. They have some splendid men in the War Department, some men that are doing their duty most efficiently, and they have some that I think are derelict. But I do question the action of the War Department if their action can be said to be creating a sentiment in America to leave those bodies in France. I think it is wrong to try to do it.

Mr. DICKINSON. Has the spirit to offset that sentiment in the war or that attitude on the part of the War Department had anything to do with the introduction of this bill by yourself?

Mr. BLAND. I assure you that it has not, except my lack of confidence in certain men in the War Department to carry out the wish of the parents and to delay with a view of creating a sentiment back home to justify it has prompted me to get at the matter probably a little faster and use more diligence than I would otherwise.

Mr. ROGERS. Assuming that the War Department is reluctant in this matter; assuming, as you said a moment ago, in answer to Mr. Dickinson's question, that a more explicit direction or mandate from Congress may be necessary in order to stir the department into the fullest activity, would you say that it was better to give that direction or mandate from Congress and thereafter to rely upon this completely organized group of men who have given a great deal of time and attention and care to this matter, rather than as proposed by your bill to create a special commission which will be starting in with zero knowledge and will have to get the knowledge, will have to get in touch with the situation, what has been done, and thereafter to go ahead and build on that?

Mr. BLAND. I have thought about that and I assure you that I have no prejudice against any man that is connected with this serv-

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ice that would cause me to want to dispense with his services that I know anything about. For instance, the present head of the bureau of registration service, in my judgment, is unusually capable as one man to perform this task and I have not the slightest idea but the President would appoint him as a representative of the Army. I think he would do so. Nobody knows, however, that he would do so. I think he would do it. The Navy could certainly select some very capable person and the President would appoint him. I do not think that an Army personnel alone are the people to handle this job that more or less is a question of sympathy.

Mr. NEWTON. I notice that you want one representative from the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. Of course, a great, great majority of those burials are members of the Army. What percentage of them are seamen?

Mr. BLAND. I believe that you ought to ask Col. Pierce that. There are a great many sailors buried there, as I understand it, in France, and at Chateau Thierry, the marines were in there.

Mr. NEWTON. But they are part of the Navy Department. Is it advisable to have two from that department with the aggregate figure under the aggregate of the Army?

Mr. BLAND. We have had that feature in mind, that there be but one person from the Navy and that to include the marines, and to have three civilians.

Mr. CONNALLY. I will state that I share the views of the while committee and that is that personally if I had a loved one over there I would rather have him stay over there but that the parents that desire the return of the bodies ought to have them returned. I want to ask you about your suggestion as one of the reasons you are pressing this bill, that you feared Congress might pass other legislation. Congress has the say, and if it was disposed to do that, it would not in all probability be your bill.

Mr. BLAND. Unless the question is brought to the attention of the Members, a bill can pass through Congress without very much of a vote here. We very often pass bills here, gentlemen, by voice, as you know, without a roll call.

Mr. CONNALLY. You do not want this one passed that way?

Mr. BLAND. I do know that one bill has passed the Senate making an appropriation of $500,000, the Spencer bill, and is now pending before the House Military Affairs Committee.

Mr. CONNALLY. You don't oppose that bill for the bodies of those that do remain there?

Mr. BLAND. The bodies that remain over there, no; we can take care of them in that way, but Col. Shipman in his testimony said, "We are waiting until Congress declares its purpose as to what we shall do before we go ahead and concentrate these graves." If that appropriation goes through, I take it that Col. Shipman will be asking that Congress appropriate the money for the concentration of these graves; he will go ahead and dig them up. They can not dig up one and leave the other grave that is wanted back in America; that would be a duplication of work.

Mr. CONNALLY. When this bill that you spoke of goes through, is it not best to let those remain that desire to remain?

Mr. BLAND. I do not know what it will cover., I am afraid it will go through. That is why Congress ought to be up on its toes on

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this proposition. I am afraid it will fasten upon us a policy that will prevent our ever getting these boys home.

Mr. CONNALLY. The policy is in Congress at any time to control. You favor bringing these bodies back in two or three years?

Mr. BLAND. I said it was not practicable to bring them home just now.

Mr. CONNALLY. You expressed some opinion in your remarks in the House as to the length of time you thought it would be practicable.

Mr. BLAND. That is more or less guesswork. Besides I am not an expert on it. Probably Col. Pierce can tell you exactly how long.

Mr. CONNALLY. Let me ask this, because I am not hostile to the bill. Don't you think in view of the fact that the War Department has a record of every grave in France that is available and has the answers of the soldiers' relatives from the questionnaires, stating whether they wanted them returned, and has an organization that is engaged now in disinterring bodies in scattered graves and putting them in a single cemetery, don't you think it would be much better for Congress, if it takes action at this time, to direct the War Department by resolution or through legislation to bring those bodies home whose parents request it?

Mr. BLAND. I have not thought so, and my judgment is based upon the opinions of some of the parents of the boys that we ought to see that the War Department or some organization should do it.

Mr. FLOOD. Don't you think it is the fixed policy of the Government to bring home the bodies of all soldiers whose parents desire it as soon as necessary arrangements for that purpose can be made with the French Government?

Mr. BLAND. I just covered that matter before you came in, Mr. Flood, by reading in the record a statement in which the Secretary of War asked the parents to sympathize with the War Department's view that they ought to remain in France.

Mr. FLOOD. I understood the policy was to bring back all the bodies of these soldiers, whose people wanted them brought back, as soon as the necessary diplomatic arrangements to that effect could be made with the French Government, and those that wanted to remain there the Government would consider whether to remain or not.

Mr. BLAND. If that is the intention of the War Department, why was this statement made by the Secretary of War?

Mr. FLOOD. To what statement do you refer?

Mr. BLAND. A statement quoted by Mr. Gard in the Congressional Record of October 15, page 7410:

> In view of the very large number of dead interred in France, and the fact that they are in well-kept and well-cared-for cemeteries, and that those cemeteries will constitute a great field of honor in France, the War Department hopes that a large number of parents will sympathize with the feeling of the department that it is the wiser and better course to leave those bodies in France; but the War Department has promised to return the bodies of those whose families insist upon it as soon as arrangements can be effected.

Mr. HOUGHTON. The Government promised to bring those bodies back and the Government will have to make good on that promise. I think every one agrees to that. But there are some parents who

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do not want the bodies brought back. There are some parents who do wish the bodies back and in between there is probably a great mass of people who are not really sure of what they do want.

Mr. BLAND. That is true.

Mr. HOUGHTON. It will depend a great deal upon what happens. You are in favor of bringing back the bodies?

Mr. BLAND. Of those whose parents and relatives want them.

Mr. HOUGHTON. I think everybody agrees to that. It is not a question purely of transportation, it is not a question purely of means. Here in France are 4,500,000 bodies, English, Russian, French, Belgian, and American, and I do not know how many German bodies. France can not give us rights that she does not give to the other nations. If France, for reasons of her own, and for her own good reasons asks delay in this matter, no action possible could be taken with the French Government that would arouse such a wave of anger as that particular action now.

Mr. BLAND. I am not so much concerned with what the French Government thinks about it as I am with what American mothers think about it.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Let me get through with what I was going to say. We do not want any more international ill will than we can help. Is it not better then, instead of taking affirmative legislation at this time, to rest on the statement that the bodies will be brought back of those who want them back and to let the committee do what it started to do, work through the State Department to obtain cooperation of the French Government?

Mr. BLAND. I think you will have the parents of American boys on your backs so that you will be glad to take some action.

Mr. HOUGHTON. That is your opinion and I naturally sympathize with any parent who wants the body brought back. I have a great many boys in my district that are buried there, and yet so far I have had no requests to have the bodies brought back. I have had a great many statements from those who did have sons there that they preferred to have them there.

Mr. BLAND. Were they people who were able to go there and visit the graves?

Mr. HOUGHTON. No. I am in sympathy with those who want their bodies brought back, and while I am in sympathy with taking the necessary steps to do that, yet nothing by way of propaganda, by way of attempting to sway sentiment either way should be permitted.

Mr. BLAND. It has already been going on.

Mr. MASON. What do you call the letter of the Secretary of War asking the parents to sympathize with the view of the War Department?

Mr. HOUGHTON. That is propaganda.

Mr. FLOOD. I am in sympathy with your desire to have the bodies of those brought back whose parents want them brought back as soon as it possibly can be done with due respect to the French Government and the French people, and I understood before we went to Europe that they had sent out a questionnaire to 75,000, and got answers from 55,000, and three-fourths of them wanted them brought back and one-fourth did not. and I understood it was the policy of the

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Government to certainly bring them back as soon as it could make the arrangements with the French Government to do so, to bring back all those whose people wanted them brought back.

Mr. BLAND. I think that was understood until the Secretary of War made a statement and until Gen. Pershing made a statement and a number of others made statements, but the proposition before the parents of the boys is whether there is going to be any performance of the promise.

Mr. FLOOD. That is the reason I asked you about the date of the promise of the Secretary of War.

Mr. BLAND. That is in Mr. Gard's statement, and I will try to secure it for you.

Mr. HOUGHTON. I agree that Gen. Pershing has made some statement on it since he came back.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. Don't you think that propaganda calculated to stir sentiment on behalf of bereaved parents to bring the bodies of their sons back is as bad as propaganda to the contrary?

Mr. BLAND. Yes; I do not think they ought to bring those bodies back unless they want them, but I do think the parents have the right to indicate it.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. What effect do you think speeches in the House would have and agitation such as hearings like this with accounts given to the public?

Mr. BLAND. I think it will make some of them who want their boys' bodies left in France stronger in their views and those that want them brought back stronger in their view, when apprised of what is going on here.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. Don't you think it is the duty of Members of Congress as well as the department to state the actual facts existing to the parents and let the parents decide with knowledge and with information, no matter which side it is, what is entirely legitimate? I do not take the position that what you have designated as propaganda from the War Department is improper. I feel it is the duty of the Secretary of War to state the facts to the parents, if they are stated in a neutral way.

Mr. BLAND. I am not questioning any man's honesty or integrity who differs with me upon the question of bringing these bodies home. Gen. Pershing is perfectly honest, I am sure, in his views that these boys should remain there. Col. Shipman is perfectly honest in his view, and I give him credit for it, he testified that only the Chinese and Americans removed their dead.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. Of course, there are other good reasons. The mere fact that every body that is brought back to this country means the reopening of heartbreaks, a reopening of grief and sorrow in every community when one of these bodies is carried back; these sentimental considerations are to be taken into account by us.

Mr. BLAND. Here is one of the parents sitting by me.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. There are, no doubt, some who do not wish to indulge themselves in the great luxury of sorrow.

Mr. BLAND. He might answer that question instead of me.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. Each party has his own particular views about it. The question ought to be decided by the parent himself with full knowledge of the situation, it seems to me.

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Mr. BLAND. I do know of instances where parents say they can not settle down and go to work again until their boy's body is brought home. I sympathize with these people and know that they have a right to that view.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. There would be a fresh sorrow when the body comes home and it would take that much longer to heal.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Nevertheless they have a right to it.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. We have a Gold Star Mothers' Association that is, no doubt, inspired by highly laudable motives, but it serves in a way to foment agitation upon this subject which keeps alive the grief.

Mr. BLAND. It might be stated that the people who are agitating this are the mothers who are going to stand this sorrow. It is not for us to say.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. The people who are taking an active part in this are not all people who have lost their sons. There are others, many of them not connected with it, and I see a great deal of publicity given to it in the newspapers, resolutions that are passed, and so forth. It all serves to make the mothers' grief harder to bear.

Mr. FLOOD. They ought to be brought back as soon as possible, and, of course, you have to have some regard to the conditions in France. I think every parent who wants to have the body of his son brought back ought to have it done as soon as possible.

Mr. BLAND. And know it is going to be done. They ought to know that Congress has expressed itself on the proposition, that the money is appropriated for it, and the machinery provided to bring them back.

Mr. KENNEDY. What information the War Department has now as to the wishes of the parents has come mostly from notices sent out through the newspapers?

Mr. BLAND. No. They had sent out letters to the parents.

Mr. KENNEDY. I have had mothers in my district who have come to see me very recently on this matter whose sons have been killed and buried in France who have not received any such notice; simply came as a result of seeing an item in the newspaper that the War Department was anxious to obtain this information.

Mr. BLAND. I think the colonel can explain that. Probably a great many of the letters went to wrong addresses.

Mr. BEGG. I am naturally in sympathy with your attitude all the way through, Mr. Bland, but I would like to know one or two reasons why. I will be frank. Do you hold that the War Department is so inefficient that they can not bring home 75,000 boys and so have reason for creating a new commission? They took 2,000,000 over there.

Mr. BLAND. I think I would rather take the position that with the help of the War Department and Navy and civilians, and the patriotic forces of America, backed by Congress, we can do this job to the better satisfaction of the parents of the soldiers than we could to leave it to the War Department.

Mr. BEGG. We are creating a new commissioner at $5,000 a year and a lot of new help, and I am wondering if we have not plenty of officials or if they are incompetent. If they are incompetent let us bring such pressure to bear that the man who is responsible for them will see that they are competent.

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Mr. BLAND. I will say to the gentleman that some of the biggest men have left the Army. Many doers of big things have left the Army. I do not believe that the Army, as a whole, are absolutely in sympathy with this movement, and I do believe that a commission established for this purpose would go into it heartily and in a business-like manner. I want to further say, like Col. Shipman, of the Groves Registration Service, I do not think it is a question of dollars and cents that ought to be considered.

Mr. BEGG. I do in this respect; the number of dollars it takes to bring them home. I do not think it is necessary to build up another organization if we have one that can well do it.

Mr. FLOOD. Yo do not question the efficiency of the Army which is engaged in looking after graves in France now?

Mr. BLAND. As far as I have been able to learn, and I do not speak with complete knowledge on the subject, the head of the graves registration has shown a great amount of ability in connection with the service. There may be things subject to criticism. Human nature is human nature and mistakes may have occurred and conditions that they had no control of might have prevailed. I do not want to give a clean bill of health or to whitewash or to condemn. But I do want to impress you with this, and it is without prejudice against the War Department. I do not believe it should be left where it is now without further surrounding the War Department with advisers or those who can give their time and attention to this task.

Mr. BEGG. Suppose Congress passed a resolution or law ordering these bodies brought home by the War and Navy Departments.

Mr. BLAND. I am inclined to think there might be delay.

Mr. BEGG. Don't we have them in a position where we can have them explain the cause of delay?

Mr. BLAND. It may not be taken up in the same sympathetic way.

Mr. ROGERS. You contemplate over two years' delay in this resolution.

Mr. BLAND. I did, yes. I wanted to give them time enough to go over the difficulties which the graves registration service in Paris designated as insurmountable and almost impossible, and take up the question with the French Government. I think a man ought to be appointed who is in sympathy with it and will do it at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. FLOOD. In the French Chamber of Deputies somebody introduced a bill prohibiting the removal of any bodies before three years. But it never became law and our Government protested against such a law.

Mr. BLAND. I was just reading from the peace treaty to the effect that all the bodies wanted by foreign people can be brought home. There is a sanitary question raised in France that we have got to consider in a measure, and if this job is undertaken we have got to do it without creating hard feelings. Some one said we do not want to cause international complications. I feel deeply enough about this situation to say that international complicatons be damned if we can not get our boys' bodies back, and the entire Nation would say that. I do not think we should delay any longer than the sanitary conditions and transportation require.

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Mr. HOUGHTON. Is not that in the beginning and end a diplomatic situation? No one would refuse to give these bodies up. It might be a question whether it would be wise to give them up at one time or another.

Mr. BLAND. I am not sure your position is correct and later development of feeling in France might confirm the experience of Mr. Flood and myself.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Certainly the issue will be raised.

Mr. ROGERS. We have Justice McCoy here. It is five minutes to 12 but I think we can hear him for a few minutes.

STATEMENT OF HON. WALTER T. McCOY, CHIEF JUSTICE, SUPREME COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

Judge McCOY. Gentlemen, I am one of those who have an intense personal interest in this matter which comes from having lost a son in France. Of course, a cause is hurt by intemperate statements, we all know that, but I am speaking from my own experience which, of course, moves me to feeling, and I am speaking with a certain amount of bitterness in regard to the matter, and I might as well say now, and I do not hesitate, if it is within the proprieties before a committee of Congress, to say that I might say some bitter things about the War Department.

As to the practical details of carrying out the provisions of Mr. Bland's bill, it seems to me that these are so easy of solution in a fair way that I do not care to say anything about them at all. I will say that I am thoroughly in sympathy with Mr. Bland's attitude, and I know it will be the attitude of the committee, because they have expressed it now that only at an appropriate time should these bodies be brought back to the United States—only at an appropriate time, whatever that may be—but that is a matter of detail. I am sure there is competence enough in any committee or any department to see that these details are so arranged that there shall be no friction anywhere and that there shall be no undue injury to France or anywhere else in the world if the earnest desire of these parents and their relatives to have the bodies of their sons brought back shall be complied with.

Some of the gentlemen have asked, why do anything now? I do not know whether that refers to bringing back the bodies now. I take it that it does not, but if it does, then I have expressed myself on that. I do not want my boy's body brought back to this country until for sanitary or any other good reasons it is proper to do so, and if you ask why legislate now, then you are trespassing, I may say with all respect to the committee, upon a matter of sentiment. I may be one of those who indulge in the luxury of sorrow. Mr. Huddleston, you will pardon me if I mention that remark of yours, but it stirs me deeply. I do not know what to say about a thing of that kind. Shall anybody criticize me if I care to have my feelings stirred by the bringing back of my boy's body? It is for my wife and for me to say whether that is the luxury of the sorrow, or the palliation, perhaps, of the sorrow. We are all getting over that now.

Mr. HUDDLESTON. That is exactly what I said.

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Judge McCoy. I beg your pardon, then. I thought you intimated that some of us in wanting our sons' bodies brought back here were indulging in the luxury of sorrow.

Mr. Huddleston. The idea I intended to convey was that it would amount to that in some cases.

Judge McCoy. That may be; but that, with all due respect, is for the individual who is willing to take that risk.

Mr. Huddleston. I have said that.

Judge McCoy. That is why I can not believe that this committee will not act favorably now and embody into the law of the United States some provision that will eventually see to it that these bodies are brought back here, and now and at this time do something to settle the great distress which I know that there is in the minds of many parents, in my opinion. I have been before the mothers who met here at the Hotel Willard the other day, and in their minds is the fear that the sacred promise that the War Department undertook to make that these bodies will be brought back to this country will be broken.

Mr. Huddleston. What is the basis of that fear?

Judge McCoy. The basis of that fear is the statement such as that Mr. Bland read here, and I take it that Mr. Bland and Mr. Gard never would have made that statement which is quoted in the Congressional Record unless it came from somewhere.

Mr. Huddleston. You refer to a statement proceeding from Secretary Baker?

Mr. Flood. I will say that I received a communication just a short time ago that was in substance that.

Mr. Huddleston. That statement expressly promised that the bodies of all those whose parents desired them back will be brought back.

Mr. Mason. But asks them to desist from asking it.

Mr. Huddleston. But he leaves it to the parents. What is the basis for the fear of the parents who want their sons' bodies brought back that they will not have their wish gratified?

Judge McCoy. I will tell you the basis in my mind. I have absolutely no confidence in Secretary Baker or the War Department. If Col. Pierce officially resigns from the War Department and the President will put it into his hands and give him the appropriation to do it, I would have confidence in one man doing that because I know he has been in this work with his heart.

Col. Pierce. I will resign or ask to be relieved the moment the War Department or any officer above me intimates to me that I must stay my hand with regard to the execution of the solemn pledge made by the War Department and printed in Army regulations that these bodies shall be brought home in every case whether the parent desires it or not.

Judge McCoy. That statement of Col. Pierce, if possible, increases my confidence that he is in this thing with his heart and not with his mind alone. It requires a heart to do this work.

Mr. Huddleston. Do you not know that practically every Member of Congress has expressed himself on that subject privately or publicly and announced the determination that this promise shall be kept?

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Judge McCoy. I do not believe there is a Member in either branch of Congress who would vote against such a proposition.

Mr. Huddleston. What have you, as a parent who wants your son's body brought back, to fear? My view is that we should try to allay the anxiety that these parents feel and which is being unnecessarily formented.

Judge McCoy. Who is formenting it?

Mr. Huddleston. That is what I want to get, and why they are doing it. It seems to me a horrible thing to do.

Judge McCoy. I saw a statement in a newspaper that the Convention of War Mothers was meeting down here in the Hotel Willard. I saw a statement that there was a committee of what is known as the gold-star mothers down there. I gathered, and I do not rely on the newspapers for accuracy, but I gathered that somebody was trying to influence those mothers so as to prevent their taking action which they wanted to take, namely, to indorse that bill which Congressman Bland has here in regard to this matter. I went down there and saw some of those mothers, and I was asked to speak to those people. I took the stand there, as I take it now, that I do not care to upset the determination of anybody who wants his son's body to stay on the other side; I could not do that, because my attitude in regard to the matter is that it is for the individual sentiment, not judgment, of the people who are directly interested in this matter. I was asked to speak before the convention, not with any idea of doing that but just to help these mothers who talked to me with tears in their eyes; and why—because they said they were afraid that Congress was not going to do anything.

Mr. Huddleston. We have the solemn assurance of the War Department, it has even gone into the Army Regulations that these bodies shall be brought back where their parents wish it. Is there any basis for a reasonable man to think that will not be done?

Judge McCoy. Absolutely.

Mr. Huddleston. What is it?

Judge McCoy. Because if there is anything that the War Department has done well in this war without being kicked into it, I should like to have somebody tell me. I am not speaking as a partisan because I am a Democrat. I challenge anybody to point out a thing which the war organization has done during this war that it has not been forced to do by public sentiment.

Mr. Flood. Did they not win the war?

Judge McCoy. These boys who died won the war; the War Department had nothing to do with it.

Mr. Flood. The boys who lived had something to do with it.

Judge McCoy. Yes; the boys who lived did.

Mr. Huddleston. Don't you think there is enough public sentiment to get these boys' bodies back from France?

Judge McCoy. Not the slightest doubt of it; I think the whole country is back of it.

Mr. Huddleston. Don't you think you could safely say to every mother "your boy's body will come back if you want it"?

Judge McCoy. If I thought so I would not be here this morning.

Mr. Huddleston. We made an appropriation in the last Army appropriation bill for this very matter. It seems to me that the fears

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of the people are being unnecessarily fomented and excited over this and that it is the duty of Members of Congress and other people to allay these fears and sorrows.

Judge McCoy. Nobody has been working on my feelings. Nobody has come to me about the matter.

Mr. Flood. As Judge McCoy entertains the views that he does, and these mothers entertaining that view, it would seem right and wise to allay these views and this fear by taking some action.

Mr. Huddleston. I do not think there is any harm in passing a resolution in Congress pledging that all those who wanted their sons' bodies brought back home should rest assured that it would be done within a reasonable time.

Col. Pierce. Let me read a few lines of an order that has come to me that might help everybody. This is an order from the Adjutant General of the Army dated October 6, 1919, to the Director of Purchase and Storage, subject: "Return to United States of dead buried in Europe exclusive of France." The first paragraph is with regard to the Archangel dead. Paragraph 2 is as follows:

2. The Secretary of War further directs that you be informed that it is the policy of the War Department to return to the United States the bodies of Army dead buried in Italy, Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Luxemburg, and North Russia—

And since that time Austria and Serbia have been added to the list, just a little group of bodies left there, some of them have been removed—

as soon as possible, in all cases in which their return has been requested by the next of kin. Steps to this effect are to be undertaken at once without waiting on the action of the French Government with respect to the dead in France.

The disposition of the dead in the countries above mentioned, whose return has not been requested by the next of kin, will be decided when the number of such dead in each country is known.

Regardless of whether or not their return has been requested no bodies will be left in Germany, Luxemburg, and North Russia.

All bodies from North Russia will be returned to the United States if they have not already been reinterred in France.

The project was at first to leave them at the ports in France until their disposition was decided.

The Director of Purchase and Storage (which is the Quartermaster's Department) is charged with initiating, arranging for, and executing all measures necessary to put the policy outlined above into effect. Questions arising in connection therewith, requiring the action of higher authority, will be submitted through customary channels for necessary decision and action.

(Signed) P. C. Harris,
Adjutant General.

And it committed the execution of that project to me, and I have already placed the necessary organization and am daily expecting orders to go ahead with reference to employing the necessary personnel.

I would like to say just one thing, that Maj. Shipman is one of my subordinates in Paris, and that he is due to get a letter from his headquarters requesting that he shall not in future express sentiments in the name of the Graves Registration Service which are not at all entertained——

Mr. Bland. We asked him under oath, and he had to give the information.

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Col. PIERCE. And which created the impression on your mind that the Graves Registration Service said that; it was Maj. Shipman who said it.

Judge McCOY. May I ask Col. Pierce a question? You say the matter has been left with the Quartermaster's Department with reference to the matter of expenditures and of money. Do you have to submit that matter to the Quartermaster's Department and gets its O. K.?

Col. PIERCE. To the Quartermaster General; yes, sir.

Judge McCOY. If Col. Pierce will permit me, I will tell you why. I was in France this summer, and understand me, I repeat again that in Col. Pierce I have the utmost confidence, both as to his ability and his sentiments in these matters, so I do not want what I am saying now to be construed as a reflection on him. I was in one of those cemeteries in France this summer. The section is 100 miles square. There are in all 103 American cemeteries. I went to the headquarters in command of a certain officer whose rank I will not even mention, because of certain reasons which you all appreciate, and he was there, with his heart and soul in the work, and there were in the field helping him two volunteer Y. M. C. A. and Red Cross young women, Why? Because he did not have the help given him by the Quartermaster General.

Col. PIERCE. May I just criticise that statement? The General Staff, will you say, please, not the Quartermaster General.

Judge McCOY. Wherever it is; I can not follow the intricacies of the War Department; that is one of the things the Colonel has illustrated here.

Mr. FLOOD. We have an organization in Paris.

Judge McCOY. In Paris; oh, yes. Everybody goes to Paris. And they were very glad to be in Paris and in Surenes, outside of Paris, and anybody can go there and see the way that is run because the tourists are already beginning to go there. This was in another part of France, these 103 cemeteries. What would you say when the Quartermaster or the General Staff, if you please, the Secretary of War, or Gen. March, I do not care where the final responsibility lies—what would you say that he gave him in the way of an automobile to go over that 100 square miles. You would say that with some several thousand Cadillacs in France which were not doing anything, and never had done anything, that he might have one of those. Not at all. He had one of the low-priced machines with a broken back spring, which was tied up with a piece of wire to hold it together, and when he was traveling over this territory he had to get the French people or anybody he could to help him tie the two parts of that spring together.

Mr. BLAND. Probably this was a machine that the French Government would not buy at the reduced price.

Judge McCOY. Or which the War Department would not give to them as it did so many other things.

Mr. CONNALLY. It seems to me we should get down to the point in this matter. I don't see that that is material to this inquiry. I will be very glad to listen to Judge McCoy about anything that is pertinent in this matter, but if I am going to sit here in connection with this, I think he should stick to the subject.

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Judge McCoy. Let me show why it is material and revelant. Mr. Huddleston asked me why I had no confidence in them to do these things.

Mr. Connally. That is not an issue for the committee. Mr. Bland and Mr. Flood will attend to that.

Mr. Rogers. I do not think that we are very closely guided by matters of relevancy.

Mr. Connally. If the Judge has anything to say on the subject, so far as I am concerned, I am glad to hear him.

Mr. Rogers. We shall be glad to hear the Judge at any other time.

Judge McCoy. Let me finish my statement for the record. I was endeavoring to show, if I might, by one concrete instance which did not affect me personally—it was not personal to me in any way—why I had no confidence in the General Staff or any other persons or body which finally has to pass on that. There was the automobile that was being used by this man. The war regulations are that no officer shall go around in that territory, so I was told by this officer, unless he has a private soldier to drive his car so he may attend to his business. He had none. He told me that the duty was on him as it naturally would be.

Mr. Flood. Do you think that was due to economy of the War Department?

Judge McCoy. I will follow it up and tell you what he told me.

Mr. Huddleston. I will have to make the point of order that the House is in session.

Mr. Rogers. I think the committee will be glad to hear Judge McCoy at a later date, possibly next Tuesday.

Judge McCoy. I thank you for your attention.

Mr. Dickinson. Here is a bulletin in reference to Mr. Bland's testimony that I think should go in the record.

(The bulletin referred to is as follows:)

[From War Department News Bureau, Oct. 3. 1919.]

INFORMAL STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF WAR IN CONEFRENCE WITH NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENTS.

I have given orders to return to the United States the bodies of American soldiers interred in Germany, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, north Russia, and Great Britain, the only question about those coming from north Russia being the fact that some of them were returned to France and interred there, so that the question of the consent of the French Government, or rather the whole question of returning the bodies of soldiers who are buried in France, which is very much the graver and larger problem, is involved to the extent that any of our deceased in Russia have been reinterred in France. But those who are buried outside of France will be returned at the earlist possible moment. There are, so far as I know, no international or diplomatic difficulties involved in any of those cases. The Siberian question is not included in this policy and has not yet been determined.

In view of the large number of dead interred in France, and the fact that they are accumulated in well-kept and well-cared-for cemeteries, and that these cemeteries will constitute a great field of honor in France, the War Department hopes that a large number of parents will sympathize with the feeling of the department that it is the wiser and better course to leave these bodies in France; but the War Department has promised to return the bodies of those whose families insist upon it as soon as arrangements can be effected.

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OCTOBER 6, 1919.

From: The Adjutant General of the Army.
To: The Director of Purchase and Storage.
Subject: Return to United States of dead buried in Europe exclusive of France.

1. The Secretary of War directs that a copy of the following cable sent October 4 to Connor, American Expeditionary Forces, Paris, be furnished you:

"No. 1595, par. 2. If Archangel Army dead have not been reinterred in France, it is desired that on arrival at French port these dead be shipped direct to United States without reinterment in France. Advise."

2. The Secretary of War further directs that you be informed that it is the policy of the War Department to return to the United States the bodies of Army dead buried in Italy, Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Luxembourg, and north Russia as soon as possible in all cases in which their return has been requested by the next of kin. Steps to this effect are to be undertaken at once without waiting on the action of the French Government with respect to the dead in France.

The disposition of the dead in the countries above mentioned, whose return has not been requested by the next of kin, will be decided when the number of such dead in each country is known.

Regardless of whether or not their return has been requested, no bodies will be left in Germany, Luxembourg, and north Russia.

All bodies from north Russia will be returned to the United States if they have not already been reinterred in France.

The Director of Purchase and Storage is charged with initiating, arranging for, and executing all measures necessary to put the policy outlined above into effect. Questions arising in connection therewith requiring the action of higher authority will be submitted through customary channels for necessary decision and action.

(Signed) P. C. HARRIS,
Adjutant General.

(Thereupon, at 12.15 o'clock p. m., the committee adjourned.)

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